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SUBJECT: THE PILOT AFGHAN PUBLIC PROTECTION PROGRAM: SIX MONTH PILOT INDICATES IMPORTANCE OF MOI MATERIAL SUPPORT, GIROA/INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVES

REF: A. REF: A. 09 KABUL 1016

1B. B. 09 KABUL 1425

1C. C. 09 KABUL 2339

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Classified By: Political-Military Counselor Philip Kosnett for Reasons
1.4 (a) & (d)

11. (C) Summary: The Afghan Public Protection Program (AP3)*an Afghan National Security Force (ANSF) organization providing community-based security under the auspices of the Ministry of the Interior (MOI)*has taken root in several districts of Wardak province. The Embassy and USFOR-A assess results so far as mixed. The AP3 and Afghan National Police (ANP) remain wary of one another, but there are growing instances of tactical coordination. Integration with ANP has been enhanced by coordinating the timing of Focused District Development (FDD) training with the insertion of AP3 ,Guardians,, back into their communities. However, the inability of the Ministry of Interior (MOI) to pay salaries in a timely manner, not only to AP3 but also to the Wardak ANP, has caused a severe strain on the AP3.

12. (C) Prospects for expansion of the program to other areas will be dependent upon an already overstretched MoI,s willingness and ability to provide material support, and the ability of GIROA and its international partners to provide community elders and other local power brokers with development incentives to provide their sons as recruits for the program. END SUMMARY

Weathering Challenges of First Fighting Season

13. (C) The AP3 has been implemented in Jalrez, Nerkh and northern Sayadebad districts of Wardak Province. There are currently 538 Guardians located in these districts, to include the recent 43 graduates of Class 4 on August 17. The sequencing of the arrival of Guardians has coincided with Task Force Spartan operations working from northern Wardak to the south. AP3 Guardians were introduced after clearing operations were completed and additional security forces were required for the &hold8 portion of operations. They have been closely mentored by Coalition Forces Special Operations Command Component Afghanistan (CFSOCC-A).CFSOCC-A judges that the Guardians have performed admirably given the security situation and other obstacles faced during their first few months of activity. The fighting during the summer months has tested them, but they remain a cohesive entity that has not backed down from attack or intimidation.

14. (C) Having said that, recruitment has recently been strained for three reasons: (1) the seasonal fighting has intimidated elders and others local decision makers from

recommending recruits, particularly in the more troublesome Pashtu areas of the province; (2) the elections have brought more attention and enemy fighters to the area, further adding to intimidation, perceived or otherwise; and (3) efforts to implement the program too quickly also have led to significant problems.

¶15. (C) For example, the National Directorate of Security (NDS) has not received candidate packages from ANP since the first class, and so cannot complete adequate vetting. At the local level, rushing the recruitment process recently resulted in locals pushing forward recruits from other provinces to meet its quotas; as a result only 43 of the original 300 candidates were allowed to proceed with the course. U.S. military facilitators estimate recruitment will pick up again after the elections and once the fall and winter months set in. This will allow the AP3 force to be trained and equipped and also gain some basic experience so they can better defend their land next spring.

MOI Support Remains A Key Limiting Factor

¶16. (C) The AP3 Guardians face a continued challenge working at the bottom of the ANP chain of command. The Ministry of Interior (MOI) has yet to resolve logistical and financial problems which are hampering the AP3's ability to sustain itself. Inconsistent pay, low wages, and lack of food, water and fuel to carry out their mission are consistent shortcomings, that will open the AP3 to the same corrupt practices that are standard fare for the ANP. To date the AP3 has been largely reliant upon CSTC-A for supplies, in large part because the ANP has difficulties in maintaining its own mission capabilities and does not have sufficient resources at the district level to provide for the increasing

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numbers of AP3 Guardians.

¶17. (C) Given these challenges, the MOI does not have the capacity to expand the AP3 program, unless that expansion comes at the expense of ANP expansion, which is already facing significant pressure. Indeed, with a broken logistics system, MOI cannot reliably provide pay, food, or equipment to its existing police force. CSTC-A's most recent estimate puts annual, nationwide police attrition (including casualties as well as desertions) at 28 percent, with reliability of pay and quality of life issues driving much of this dissipation. Nevertheless, the MOI is interested in using AP3 as a model for various proposed tribal security experiments, none of which are as well organized or accountable as AP3. The concept of community defense forces is one with which Afghans are comfortable (comment: although the historical success record of central government backed local militias is decidedly mixed; end comment), and MOI is interested in expanding the program. In the absence of U.S. support for AP3 expansion, MOI has shown that it will use various justifications * election security, security for road construction, problems with private security companies *for deputizing locals as police auxiliaries (REF C).

Relations between ANP and AP3: Cool with Warming Trend

¶18. (C) The AP3's integration with the ANP has been enhanced by synchronizing the return of AP3 Guardians to their villages with FDD training of local ANP (a system under which National Civil Order Police fill in for a district's regularly-assigned police while the latter are away in FDD training). In this manner the Guardians have time to establish their own presence within those communities at fixed locations. This provides the AP3 the opportunity to re-connect with their communities in their new roles as Guardians.

¶9. (C) U.S. military program implementers and local Afghan leaders recognized early an inherent tension between the two forces, with the Guardians being issued new weapons while the ANP have to rely on their older gear (REF A). In general the ANP remain wary of the Guardians, mainly because they are from the local communities. Many if not most of the ANP in Wardak hail from outside the province. However, in some areas the AP3 have befriended the ANP and brought them into their homes as guests. This has served to strengthen the bonds between the Guardians, ANP, and the communities that they are working in. There are also instances where ANP has lent vehicles to AP3 so they could patrol their areas of responsibility because AP3 did not have vehicles with weapons mounted on them.

AP3 as Vehicle for Development, Governance

¶10. (C) Wardak Governor Fadei has viewed AP3 as more of a &community development8 initiative than just a locally recruited security force, according to PRT reporting. This has proven to be the case as the recruitment of Guardians has successfully connected the lowest level of government in the Province to the central government, thereby reinforcing governance at the grassroots level. In addition to security, a critical determining factor in whether a community will provide recruits for the program is the local leaders, confidence that there will be a resulting benefit to the community.

CFSOCC-A Assessment Under Way

¶11. (C) CFSOCC-A has used the election/post-election period as an opportunity to stand down from shaping and recruiting activities and focus on the assessment of AP3 effectiveness. A formal CFSOCC-A assessment of AP3 is due on September 7. Responding to requests from the international community, CSTC-A will also provide the International Police Coordination Board (IPCB) with an evaluation of the program in early September. We are working closely with CFSOCC-A) both in Kabul and in Wardak Province) as it undertakes its review and assessment of the AP3 program.

Comment

¶12. (C) Overall, the Mission believes the AP3 concept is sound, but GIRQA's ability to expand it will be sharply

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limited by MOI's resource limitations. Unless these budgetary and logistical issues are resolved at both the national and local levels, the AP3 program is in peril of stalling out and potentially failing to stand on its own. We also believe the program's prospects for success are tied to GIRQA and international ability to provide development incentives to AP3 communities to ensure community support. Attempting to expand the program without addressing these obstacles would be a formula for failure.

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